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## GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.

NARRATIVE OF HALL'S NORTH POLAR EXPEDITION.<sup>1</sup>—Captain Hall having died on his return to the winter quarters of the *Polaris*, from his journey to the farthest point north hitherto attained, it was reserved for others to write the record of his daring and successful expedition. The volume contains everything of general interest relating to the origination, organization and the fitting up of the expedition, which was first suggested and organized by Hall himself. One chapter is devoted to an account of Hall's earlier researches and is accompanied by a map illustrating the route he pursued during his eight years of Arctic exploration, which fitted him so well for the crowning work of his life. Geographers will also find in this volume a detailed account (sometimes too irrelevant details are given) of the eventful history of the expedition after Hall's death. The woodcuts are numerous, but are not of a high order of excellence.

STANLEY'S ACCOUNT OF THE CONGO.—Mr. Stanley thus sums up in his letter to the New York *Herald* and the London *Telegraph*, our present knowledge of the Congo River: The entire area the Congo drains embraces about 860,000 square miles. Its source is in that high plateau south of Lake Tanganyika, in a country called Bisa, or Ubisa by the Arabs. The principal tributary feeding Bemba Lake is the Chambezi, a broad, deep river, whose extreme sources must be placed about longitude 33° east. Bemba Lake, called Bangweolo by Livingstone, its discoverer, is a large body of shallow water, about 8,400 square miles in extent. It is the residuum of an enormous lake that in very ancient times must have occupied an area of 500,000 square miles, until by some great convulsion the western maritime mountain chain was riven asunder, and the Congo began to roar through the fracture. Issuing from Bemba Lake, the Congo is known under the name of Luapula, which, after a course of nearly 200 miles, empties into Lake Mweru, a body of water occupying an area of about 1,800 square miles. Falling from Mweru, it receives the name of Lualaba, from the natives of Rua. In Northern Rua it receives an important affluent called the Kâmalondo. Flowing in a direction north by west, it sweeps, with a breadth of about 1400 yards, by Nyangwe Manyema, in latitude 26° 15' 45" south, longitude 26° 5' east, and has an altitude of about 1,450 feet above the ocean. Livingstone, having lost two weeks in his dates, appears, according to Stanford's map of 1874, to have placed Nyangwe in latitude 4° 1' south, longitude 24° 16' east, but this wide difference may be due to the carelessness of the draughtsman. Those who feel interested in it should compare it with the latest map

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of the North Polar Expedition, U. S. Ship *Polaris*, Capt. C. F. Hall, commanding. Edited under the direction of the Hon. G. M. Robeson, Secretary of the Navy, by Rear-Admiral C. H. Davis, U. S. N. U. S. Naval Observatory, 1876. 8° pp., 696.

issued by Stanford, or the map published with the traveler's last journals. The distance the Congo has flowed from its extreme source in Eastern Bisa to Nyangwe Manyema is about 1,100 miles.

EXPLORATIONS IN PALESTINE.—The Palestine Exploration Society, which is supported by voluntary contributions, was organized in 1870 for the purpose of making a scientific survey of the region known in Biblical history as Moab, Gilead and Bashan. In 1873 the first surveying party was sent out, and in 1875 the work of exploration was further extended by a second party, one of the members of which was Dr. Selah Merrill, who gave special attention to the archæology of the regions explored. The work of surveying was soon suspended, however, but Dr. Merrill continued his researches during 1876 and a part of the present year.

At a late meeting of the Society, as reported in the *Tribune*, Dr. Merrill said, in part: "One of the difficulties of exploration in Palestine is caused by the traditions which widely prevail—a difficulty which is experienced in exploration in no other part of the world. Numerous archæological facts have been collected, however, which will be very valuable in the study of the Bible. All explorations are carried on in the face of many obstacles. The climate is very peculiar and severe, and many explorers have lost their lives on this account. The Valley of the Jordan from Lake Tiberias to the Dead Sea, sixty miles in length and about three miles in width, is generally supposed to be a desert, but this is not so. I have examined the Valley of the Jordan on the east side several times, and I am satisfied that it could be easily irrigated from the Jordan itself. It would then become exceedingly fertile, and it is believed that half a million people could live in this valley. Some very important mounds exist in various parts of this region. In the Succoth region there is a very large one, thickly covered with pottery. Into this I wished to dig, for I think some very valuable results may be obtained in this way. It was in this region that King Solomon's brass foundries were situated. I think that the best evidence of the situation of the Cities of the Plain shows that they were at the north end of the Dead Sea. In the region east of the Jordan nearly all the houses are deserted, on account of the Moslem and Turkish rule. You can scarcely travel half an hour in this region without meeting with a valuable ruin. The theatres in many cases were built so as to command fine views of the surrounding country. Between Petra and Damascus there were between 400 and 500 miles of Roman roads. There was also in ancient times an extensive system of irrigation. This was especially apparent in the Valley of the Jabbok, the most fertile portions of which are now under cultivation."

ORTON'S EXPLORATIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA.—Several letters from the late Professor Orton have appeared in the New York

*Tribune* regarding his explorations in Peru, containing some interesting reflections on the probable number of inhabitants of Peru, at the time of their conquest by Pizarro. He thinks their numbers have been greatly overestimated by historical writers. Good collections of birds, reptiles and fishes were made, which by pre-arrangement are the property of Professor E. D. Cope.

GEOGRAPHICAL NEWS.—The *Geographical Magazine*, for November, contains a continuation of an interesting description of the island of Formosa, by James Morrison.—Professor Nordenskiöld expects to lead another Swedish Arctic Expedition, to start from Gothenburg about the 1st July, 1878, and *via* Tromsø or Hammerfest, make progress from Novaya Zemlya eastward, trying to force a passage along the coast of Siberia, and returning home through Behring Straits, and by the Suez Canal, thus sailing round Asia and Europe.—Next year the Norwegian Deep Sea Sounding Expedition will examine the region between North Cape, Jan Mayen, and the north of Spitzbergen, and possibly make a trip eastward, in the direction of Novaya Zemlya, to determine the position of the isothermal line of  $0^{\circ}$  C. at the sea-bottom, this line being considered the limit of the range of codfish.—Count Wilzek and Lieutenant Weyprecht have published a programme of work for the proposed international polar expeditions.—Capt. H. W. Howgate has published an account of the American preliminary Arctic Expedition, now wintering at the head of Cumberland Gulf.—M. Kelsief has been making researches during the past summer along the Murmanian Coast and in Lapland, for the Moscow Anthropological Exhibition of 1879; he has made a good collection of stone implements and other prehistoric remains.—The geography of the Upper Indus has been made by a Punjab surveyor, who has completed our knowledge of this river.—Savorgnan de Brazza has arrived at Doume, in the Loando country, on his way eastward to the Ponbara Falls. The River Sibumbay, which some geographers have described as a northern affluent of the Congo, turns out to be a feeder of the Ogowai on its left bank.—An expedition has left Belgium for the exploration of Central Africa. Dr. Maes, of Hasselt, accompanies the expedition as surgeon and naturalist.—Prof. E. S. Morse has returned from Japan after six months explorations in the neighborhood of Tokio, and has made several expeditions into the interior and about the coast, and discovered some prehistoric pottery, etc., of much interest.—Dr. Petermann has published a map of Costa Rica showing the results of Professor Gabb's survey made in 1873-4.

The Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, Nos. 4-6, have the following table of contents: No. IV.—Young, On a Recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa, Central Africa. Mullens, A New Route and New Mode of Traveling into Central Africa. Buchanan, On the Distribution of Salt in the Ocean as indicated by the Specific Gravity of its Waters. Allen, Notes of a Journey through

Formosa from Tamsui to Faiwamfu. Bullock, Trip into the interior of Formosa. Nares, On the Navigation of Smith's Sound, as a Route to the Polar Sea. Carpenter, Lecture on the Temperature of the Deep Sea Bottom and the Conditions by which it is determined. Trotter, The Pundit's Journey from Leh to Lhása and return to India via Assam. Macfarlane, Voyage of the Ellangowam to China Straits, New Guinea. No. V.—Address at the Anniversary Meeting, May 28th, by Sir R. Alcock. No. VI.—Crowther, Notes on the River Niger. Hutchinson, Progress of the Victoria Nyanza Expedition of the Church Missionary Society. Wallace, Lecture on the Comparative Antiquity of Continents as indicated by the Distribution of Living and Extinct Animals. Markham, The Arctic Expedition of 1875-76 (with a map). Simson, Notes of Journeys in the Interior of South America. Smith, The Translation and Transliteration of Chinese Geographical Names. Marsh, Description of a Journey Overland to India, *via* Meshed, Herat, Candahar, and the Bolan Pass, 1872. Kirk, Visit to the Mungao District, near Cape Delgado. Cottam, Overland Route to China, *via* Assam, &c., across the Irrawaddi into Yunan.

Among recent geographical works are the following: S. W. Silver & Co.'s Handbook to the Transvaal; British South Africa, Its Natural Features, Industries, Population and Gold Fields, 1877. South Africa; Its Difficulties and Present State, suggested by a recent visit to that country. By A. R. Campbell Johnson, 1877. South Africa; Past and Present. By John Noble. Loango und die Loankuste. Von Dr. Pechuel-Lösche. Leipzig, 1876. (London, Trübner & Co.)

#### MICROSCOPY.<sup>1</sup>

NEW CABINET FOR SLIDES.—Two slide cabinets have recently been described in *Science Gossip* which possess some advantages for certain purposes, and have the no small recommendation that they can be easily and cheaply made.

Mr. T. H. Moorhead's cabinet is in the book form, and is made of card-boards mounted in slate frames. Common school slates are selected, of suitable size and with perfect frames. The frames are carefully smoothed at the corners, stained mahogany color if desired, and varnished and polished. The slates are then removed from them and replaced by card-boards cut to the same size and covered on both sides with fine white paper. Across the cards are stitched bands of silk elastic at such distances that when the card is covered with rows of slides nearly touching each other each row will be crossed and kept down by one band about an inch from the ends of the slides. The band is stitched to the card at intervals of an inch and a quarter, so that each slide will be separately held. Stout canvas can be tacked to the edge of each frame, and the whole bound together, in volumes of about five each, by a

<sup>1</sup> This department is edited by Dr. R. H. Ward, Troy, N. Y.